MiG-21 crashes

1098. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of MiG-21 crashes during the past three years alongwith total loss in terms of life and property;

(b) the reasons for Government's failure to check the same; and

(c) the details of steps taken, if any, to prevent the increasing number of accidents?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) A total number of 10 MiG-21 aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) have crashed during the last three financial years from 2004-2005 to 2007-2008 (till 13.8.2007). In these accidents a total number of 7 persons lost their lives.

Besides the loss of aircraft, compensation amounting to Rs. 40,49,853/- has also been paid on account of service personnel/civilian killed/injured and loss to the civil property in these accidents.

(b) and (c) Each aircraft accident in the IAF is investigated through a Court of Inquiry (CoI) and remedial measures as per the recommendations of the CoI are taken. Besides, a continuous and multi-faceted effort is always underway to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgment and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), both indigenous and foreign, is also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircraft. Besides, anti-bird measures are also undertaken.

Delivery of Scorpene submarines

1099. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the delivery schedule originally agreed for the delivery of Scorpene submarines;

(b) whether it is a fact that the delivery of such submarines could be deferred due to delay in sanctions from France;

(c) if so, whether Government has taken up the issue with the concerned authorities in the French Government and the manufacturers, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, whether Government has contradicted the media reports in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The first submarine is scheduled to be delivered in December, 2012 and thereafter one submarine each year till December, 2017.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Explosive in the material left by army at repair shop at Pokhran

†1100. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the repair work of defence vehicles and other material in Pokhran field firing range is carried out in the local market at Pokhran;

(b) whether some material for repair work was forcibly left by the armymen with Mr. Zahoor Mohammed, the blacksmith, at Pokhran on 28th January, 2006 inspite of Mr. Zahoor Mohammed's refusal;

(c) whether the officers of field firing range received any information regarding presence of some explosive in that material and death of Shri Zahoor Mohammed; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon and if not, the persons responsible in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir. Army vehicles are routinely repaired in Army Workshops. Army convoys moving on National Highway passing through Pokhran carry repair and recovery detachments. However, single administrative vehicles breaking down on National Highways may be getting minor repairs done from the civil market.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) above.

Operational field firing ranges

1101. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether out of more than 90 Field Firing Ranges only 40 are now operational affecting the army's training programmes;

(b) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has barred opening up of any additional Field Firing Range due to perceived threat to flora and fauna of the region where such FFRs are to be located; and

(c) whether the army is now scouting for barren and rocky patches of land to locate additional FFRs which may not cause much environment damage?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) At present, 40 Field Firing Ranges (FFRs) are available to the Army for training and field firing. Availability of adequate number of FFRs is essential for the maintenance of the training standards in the Army.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.